



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES.

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC MEETING,

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOCIETY,

HELD AT THE HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS,

Tuesday, July 30th, 1850,

LORD ASHLEY (now the EARL of SHAFTESBURY) IN THE CHAIR.

(Copied from "THE LANCET," for Aug. 3rd, 1850.)

A public meeting was held at the Hanover Square Rooms on Tuesday evening last, for the establishment of this Society, the formation of which has been in progress for the last six months, under the management of Mr. Tucker (with whom it originated), together with other zealous promoters of the scheme.

Lord ASHLEY occupied the chair, vacating it in an advanced stage of the proceedings, after which it was occupied by Dr. Babington, the president-elect of the Society. The meeting was most respectably and numerously attended, nearly 200 gentlemen being present, among whom we observed many of the most distinguished members of the profession. The interest excited in the objects of the Society appeared to be unusually great, and the meeting would doubtless have been much larger, but that there happened to be a dinner of the Apothecaries' Society the same evening. The speeches delivered on the occasion were eloquent and appropriate, and were listened to with mute and undivided attention on the part of the audience. The whole of the proceedings were conducted with the utmost propriety, and a spirit of harmony and cordiality prevailed, not less gratifying to the promoters of the Society than honourable to the profession. The meeting was, in fact, an appeal from the profession to the public for help and encouragement in effecting a mighty effort for the public weal. The necessity for further investigation into the nature of epidemic visitations, together with the imperfection of our present knowledge of the subject, was candidly admitted by the professional speakers, and even forced upon the attention of the laity, who, on their part, received the appeal with sympathy, and responded to it in a most grateful tone of encouragement and generosity.

The CHAIRMAN opened the business of the meeting in an eloquent oration, which he commenced by alluding to the appalling fact, that upwards of 12,000 persons died annually in the metropolis of epidemic diseases, and that they appeared to be depending upon causes always more or less in operation, and probably to a great extent preventible, provided the conditions of their prevalence were better understood and more carefully anticipated. The object of this institution was to remove this opprobrium, an object which commends itself to all minds in all nations; for it was not a mere question of theory or taste, but the discovery of truth, and the application of that truth to the great benefit of mankind. He regarded it, not only in its medical, but also in its moral and social bearing. Epidemics and their existing causes, bad drainage, deficient supplies of water and ventilation, and the overcrowding of habitations, tended to produce widows, orphans, pauperism, licentiousness, and intemperance. His lordship alluded to the tendency of the day to the aggregation of large masses of the people to carry out the application of the advancing science of the times to useful arts and commerce, thus, in the present state of things, augmenting the influence of epidemic diseases. One object of the Society would be, to inquire how this aggre-

gation of masses might be rendered innocuous. His lordship concluded by urging the Society to proceed in a right spirit, not for the sake of eulogy, but desiring, with one heart and mind, to effect a true and lasting benefit upon mankind. [We are sorry our limits will not allow a more detailed report of this interesting speech.]

The following *resolutions* were then proposed, and carried unanimously, viz. :—

1. That a Society be forthwith established for the investigation of epidemic diseases, to be called the “Epidemiological Society,” and that all gentlemen interested in its objects shall be eligible as Members.

2. That the Society shall be governed by a President, Vice-Presidents, Council, and other Officers.

3. That Dr. BABINGTON be requested to accept the office of President of the Society.

4. That the following gentlemen be requested to act as Vice-Presidents, viz. :—

THOMAS ADDISON, M.D.	J. HAVILAND, M.D., Regius Professor of Physic, Cambridge.
RICHARD BRIGHT, M.D., F.R.S.	Sir JAMES M'GRIGOR, Bart., K.C.T.S.
Sir B. C. BRODIE, Bt., F.R.S.	JOHN NUSSEY, Esq.
Sir W. BURNETT, Kt. K.C.H., F.R.S.	JOHN PROPERT, Esq.
Sir C. M. CLARKE, Bt., M.D., F.R.S.	G. L. ROUPELL, M.D. F.R.S.
Rev. THOMAS DALE, M. A. Canon-Res. of St. Paul's.	THOMAS SOUTHWOOD SMITH, M.D.
R. D. GRAINGER, Esq. F.R.S.	Colonel SYKES, F.R.S.
Sir CHARLES HASTINGS, M.D., Worcester.	THOMAS WATSON, M.D.

5. That the following gentlemen do constitute the Council, viz. :—

JACOB BELL, Esq.	H. B. LEESON, M.D., F.R.S.
JAMES BIRD, M.D.	J. O. M'WILLIAM, M.D., F.R.S.
GOLDING BIRD, M.D., F.R.S.	J. MARSON, Esq.
A. BRYSON, M.D., R.N.	E. PARKES, M.D.
G. BUSK, Esq., F.R.S.	W. PERCIVALL, Esq.
W. B. CARPENTER, M.D. F.R.S.	E. C. SEATON, M.D.
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W. JENNER, M.D.	C. R. WALSH, Esq.
R. GORDON LATHAM, M.D., F.R.S.	

The following are some of the more interesting points alluded to by the several speakers.

Dr. BABINGTON wished to correct an error which had appeared in a portion of the periodical press, to the effect that he was the founder of the Society. He must disclaim this honour. The merit of originating the Society was exclusively due to Mr. Tucker. He (Dr. Babington) had only, in common with others, cheerfully given a helping hand, when solicited to do so by Mr. Tucker, and he felt it incumbent upon him thus publicly to state the fact. The subject was not new; from the time of Hippocrates to the present, epidemics had engaged much of medical attention. They were rife in the middle ages, but still more so of late. There were, however, new circumstances connected with them. The physical sciences had made great advances of late. Animal chemistry, human and comparative physiology, meteorology, and microscopic anatomy, might be considered as new sciences, all bearing an application to the theory of epidemic diseases. And it must be impossible for one man, or for a number of men, separately engaged, to work out the many problems presented to their attention. It has been said that great discoveries have been made by individuals, not by a body of men. This is not wholly true, and, if it were, the Society does not contemplate interfering with the exertions of others, otherwise than by facilitating their labours in every possible way. He then

referred to the recent discoveries in magnetism, to Reid's theory of storms, and other important results of combined observations, which could not, by any possibility, have been discovered by one man, or by voyagers in one ship. In the study of epidemics, there is a vast field for inquiry,—their causes, the question of contagion, (a question which one individual despaired of ever seeing settled, and declined to join the Society on that account,) the incubation of diseases, the period of a building remaining infected after the removal or recovery of a patient, and the method of treatment or cure. Indeed, through our ignorance of these subjects opprobrium has fallen on our art. But we may hereafter be enabled to obtain greater insight into all these things. The question of the treatment of yellow fever was once in the same predicament. The propriety of bleeding was much disputed. It is now known that bleeding is always fatal in this disease. If only some such negative fact were discovered of cholera, it would guide us at least to avoid doing mischief, and point indirectly to some positive discovery. One good must certainly result from the formation of this Society. The public will feel that medical men are alive to the subject, and sincerely anxious to apply their minds and their means for the public benefit. But they do expect the public to respond to this. The medical members not only give their time and their talents, but their annual guinea to the Society. But this will not be by any means sufficient to carry out the necessary researches. Accordingly, any gentlemen interested in the objects are eligible as Subscribers, and their subscriptions need not be limited to that sum. Also donations from the public to any amount will not be refused; and if necessary, it is hoped, grants from Government for some of the specific purposes contemplated by the Society will be forthcoming, as they have been on other occasions.

Dr. ADDISON joined cordially in the congratulations of his friends, that this Society commences its operations under such happy auspices as the sanction of the noble chairman. He was only giving utterance to a sentiment common to all present, when he said that the mere presence of Lord Ashley, on the occasion, proved at once that the object of the Society was the welfare and happiness of mankind. Nor was the Society less happy in the fostering care of a physician, who, if not the founder of the Society, will ever be identified with its origin. His friend Dr. Babington had not only devoted his especial attention to the subject, but he was as much esteemed as well known, as an honourable, upright, and exemplary member of the profession. The best and only reward the institution promises to its supporters is the sympathy of the benevolent, the applause of the good, and the unaffected gratitude of all parties. The investigation of epidemics has been limited in a great measure, hitherto, to the exertions of individuals; but it is far beyond their scope. And if the Society opens the remotest prospect of so understanding their diseases as to prevent or mitigate their ravages, it is well worthy of being established.

Dr. GOLDING BIRD reiterated the opinion that all who have had any experience in these investigations must know that no individuals can possibly be equal to the task. Individuals are prejudiced, and are apt to describe facts as they appear to them, or rather, as they wish them to appear; and one advantage of the Society is, that facts are submitted to others, and are subjected to a strict ordeal before they are placed on record. Thus we shall have a large mass of observation which can be depended on. None of the occurrences connected with epidemics happen by accident. They obey fixed laws. Astronomy presents apparent accidents, but further observation shows that they are only apparent. So the ordinary deviations from health must depend upon causes susceptible of investigation. The discoveries which we hope to make may not be so sublime or so magnificent as the discovery of a new planet, but they may tell more to the relief of suffering, and the moral and social benefit of mankind.

JOHN PROPERT, Esq. said that these discussions might be tedious and sickening to some minds, but when the good of mankind was the object, he was sure that Lord Ashley would be the last man to be weary or disgusted. He cordially approved of the constitution and government of the Society.

R. D. GRAINGER, Esq. hailed the establishment of this Society as one of the most important movements recently made for sanitary purposes. The necessity for investigating these diseases arose, not merely from the difference of opinion in the profession, but from the alarming increase of epidemic diseases. For seven or eight years there had been a steady increase, particularly in one class—diarrhœa. In the year 1846, the mortality from this cause was seven times greater than in 1838; and in the year 1848, the deaths from various epidemics exceeded, by 4,000, all the deaths from cholera; and in the year 1849, in the heart of the richest neighbourhood in London, the value of human life had become lower than in any civilized locality in modern times. He congratulated his brethren on the formation of a Society, the chief duties of which would be, to collect, arrange, and record facts—things beyond all price. At this time there is a store-house of facts, which only require arrangement and examination to be applied to useful purposes. He alluded to the certainty of the organic laws. The true theories of disease are not merely guesses in the midst of uncertainty—they are laws to be demonstrated by facts; but the discovery of these can only be accomplished by division of labour.

Dr. SIBSON congratulated the Society in glowing terms on the peculiar fitness of Dr. Babington for the office of President. An important advantage was, that in Dr. Babington we had a mind trained in looking at the subject in all its breadth. His attention had not been limited to one or two features or one or two visitations; he had traced the sad history from the middle ages to the calamitous year 1849; he had studied its ravages, not only in one country or district, but from east to west—not one epidemic had engaged his attention, but all. He had looked at them, not as arising from one cause, but as connected with all those influences which surround the whole world of physical agencies. Epidemics were not confined to the human race nor to the animal world: vegetables were alike exposed to them, and the potato blight preceded the cholera. The subject was full of difficulties, but must not remain unexplored. Much necessity existed for such a Society as this.

CHARLES HAWKINS, Esq. had great pleasure in presenting himself before the meeting as an unprofessional man. Mr. Grainger had said that the medical profession had lacked encouragement in their investigations. He (Mr. Hawkins) was sure they deserved encouragement, and he trusted the public would be ready to assist; and when they knew who the Officers of the Society were, they would feel confidence in men who will not ignorantly or hastily adopt views or theories not well supported by facts. The President and the list of Vice-Presidents and Council were a guarantee to the public. They inspired him with a full assurance, that under their government the objects of the Society would be fully carried out.

WILLIAM ROGERS, Esq. spoke with great energy and feeling in favour of the Society, urging its Members to zealous co-operation. Sir H. Davy had said, that one fact was worth a thousand theories, and it would be the business of the Society to note the uniform recurrence of a fact; but this required the observation of many. Communication was the life and soul of study, and there was nothing which the Society might not expect to achieve. He tendered his annual guinea with great pleasure, and hoped the Society would meet with public support.

Dr. Roupell, C. J. B. Lord, Esq., Charles Cochrane, Esq., Dr. James Bird, and Dr. Allison, addressed the meeting, but our space will not permit any further allusion to their speeches.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF

EPIDEMIC DISEASES.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

B. G. BABINGTON, M.D. F.R.S.

ON OPENING THE

FIRST SESSION OF THE SOCIETY,

DECEMBER 2, 1850.

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EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE PRESIDENT, B. G. BABINGTON, M.D. F.R.S.

ON OPENING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE SOCIETY,

AT THE HOUSE OF

THE ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY,

53, BERNERS STREET,

On Monday, December 2nd, 1850.

GENTLEMEN,

As the circumstances under which this Society originated may not be known to many here present, I deem it proper to commence what I have to offer you by making a brief allusion to this subject. So long ago as February, 1848, sixteen months before the last appearance of epidemic cholera in this country, our honorary secretary, Mr. TUCKER, in a Letter bearing the signature "Pater," and published in *The Lancet*, first gave expression to the notion, that the members of our profession ought to combine for the purpose of accumulating experience with respect to the treatment of that disease.

In July, 1849, this notion was further developed in a second communication, under the same name; but it was not until the following September that a new society, for the investigation of cholera and other epidemic diseases, was distinctly proposed, in a third Letter from "Pater."

In a fourth Letter, published on the 1st of December last, I find it stated, that with respect to the formation of a new medical society, to take into consideration a systematic investigation of epidemic diseases, a few medical gentlemen had formed themselves into a committee, had occasionally held meetings on the subject, and, after due consideration, had come to the conclusion that such a society was greatly needed. In that letter, the author, who now, for the first time, wrote in his own name, remarked that there never had been a medical society in this country which had devoted itself solely to the investigation of epidemic diseases, and that, had there been such an one before the late visitation, some more settled plan of treatment might long before have been resolved upon. "It is painful to have to confess," says he, "that up to this day we know neither the real cause, the means of prevention, nor the cure, of this awful malady; but it is hoped by the combination of talent in all branches of the profession meeting together under one roof, formed into one body for one good—one national cause, that what it is possible for man to effect, shall not much longer remain a mystery." "Having," he continues, "accomplished as much as this country, aided by others, can effect with respect to Asiatic cholera, we shall still have to combat other enemies to the human race, which at this moment are thought but little of—scarlatina, typhus fever, small pox, measles, &c.,—which are said to have destroyed 12,000 annually in London alone. It is thought that the formation and working of such a society would give the highest satisfaction to the public, who anxiously look to the profession for knowledge in these matters, and that it would ere long, prove a better bond of union between the public and the medical profession than any society which has ever existed."

Mr. TUCKER persevered in his exertions, undeterred by many difficulties, and at length succeeded in persuading others, besides the immediate friends who formed his committee, to join in the good work which he had undertaken. The result was, that a meeting took place on the 6th of March

last, over which Mr. ERASMUS WILSON presided, in the Hanover Square Rooms, when it was resolved to form a society for the investigation of epidemic diseases. From that time this Society might be considered as having at least an embryo existence.

At a second meeting in Hanover Square, on the 30th of July, at which Lord ASHLEY kindly consented to take the chair, and which was very numerously attended by members of the profession and others, the objects of the Society were eloquently set forth by his Lordship, who was followed by numerous other speakers, and the constitution of the Society was framed by the appointment of President, Vice-Presidents, Council, and other Officers. There has been no General Meeting of the Society since that period.

Whoever has watched the formation of a new street, of which so many have of late been constructed in this metropolis, cannot fail to have observed, that for a long time the line of way seems to make no visible progress towards completion, so as even to excite our surprise that house-building should be so slow a process. Yet during all that period the work is going on, and the workmen are busily employed—some in digging foundations, some in excavating sewers and drains. We heed them not, because they are pursuing their silent labours underground, and there is little or nothing to show, for all the pains that they are taking; but when once these preliminaries are accomplished, and they reach the surface we are, on the contrary, astonished to find how quickly the houses spring up, as it were by magic, on either side, and how in fewer days than it had before taken months, handsome edifices rise up before our eyes. Now gentlemen, our society, like the new street, to which I would compare it, may seem for some months past to have remained in an inactive state, because our works have not been apparent. Our explanation is simple; we have been labouring at the foundations. These are, I trust, now solidly laid, and on this night we rise, for the first time, above the surface, and appear before the public. Let us hope, that ere long we shall erect such a superstructure, as by its beauty and utility may demonstrate that we have not been working in vain.

To descend from metaphor to plain fact, the months that have intervened between the formation of our Society and the present time have been devoted by our Council, and by Committees formed from their body, to framing the laws, to arranging our mode of proceeding, and to determining, in more detail than a mere definition could convey, what are the objects which we propose to carry out, and how we may best effect their accomplishment.

From the earliest ages to the present period, epidemic diseases have, from time to time been the scourges of the human race; and the Sacred Volume, at once the most ancient and the most authentic history of remote antiquity, records, as you well know, many awful visitations of the pestilence, which but too surely marked the anger of a justly-offended Deity—offended, but not implacable; for the plague was ever and anon stayed by the supplications of those whom the Almighty permitted to intercede with Him on behalf of his disobedient children.

In later times, we have no reason to believe that the great Jehovah interferes with the laws which He, in his infinite wisdom, has laid down for the governance of mankind and of all created beings. The days of miracles are past, yet the Author of all visits us as surely and as fearfully as ever through the operation of natural causes; and it is one purpose of our existence, on which our welfare is made to depend, that we endeavour to discover and avert them. The means of doing so have, in these latter days, been greatly increased. The practical tendencies of the age lead towards the improvement of physical science, and much success has rewarded our researches in this department.

The object then of this Society, I take to be, to endeavour, by the light of modern science, to review all those causes which result in the manifestation and spread of epidemic diseases—to discover causes at present unknown, and investigate those which are ill understood—to collect together facts, on which scientific researches may be securely based—to remove errors which impede their progress—and thus as far as we are able, having made ourselves thoroughly

acquainted with the strongholds of our enemies, and their modes of attack, to suggest those means by which their invasion may either be prevented, or if, in spite of our exertions, they may have broken in upon us, to seek how they may be most effectually combated and expelled.

In an address which has already been framed by the Council, and which I doubt not most of those here present have seen, the circumstances which have led the profession to join in the formation of this Society have been so fully stated, that it would be superfluous to say anything more on this head. I cannot, however, refrain from quoting some observations of my lamented friend Professor HECKER, of Berlin, peculiarly apposite, with reference to our meeting this evening: "It has long been my earnest desire," says he, "to address my honoured brethren of the profession, in order to impress on them a subject in which science is deeply interested, and which, according to the direct evidence of Nature herself, is one of the most exalted and important that could be submitted to the researches of the learned. I allude to the investigation of epidemic diseases on a scale commensurate with the extent of our exertions in other departments, and worthy of the age in which we live. The science of medicine has hitherto confined itself only to individual diseases, so far as human intellect can discern their nature. In this it has already succeeded admirably, and its success becomes every year more extensive and remarkable, but, if we carry our inquiries into the diseases of nations, and of the whole human race, medical science is mute, and, as if it were not her province to take cognizance of them, shows us only an immeasurable and unexplored domain; for to the weighty opinions of Hippocrates among the ancients, to the doctrines of Fracastoro which contain the experience of the much-tried middle ages, and lastly, to the observations of Sydenham, only trifling and isolated facts have been added. Beyond these, even up to the present times, there exist only assumptions, which might long since have been reduced to their original nothingness, had that serious spirit of inquiry prevailed which comprehends space, and penetrates ages. Amid the accumulated materials which past ages afford, the powers and the life of one individual, even with the aid of previous study, are insufficient to complete a comprehensive history of epidemics. The zealous activity of many must be combined if we would possess a work which is so much wanted, in order that we may not encounter new epidemics in culpable ignorance of analogous phenomena. How often has it appeared on the outbreak of epidemics, as if the experience of so many centuries had been accumulated in vain. Men have gazed on the phenomena with astonishment, and before they had acquired any just notion of their nature, have pronounced their opinions, which, as they have been the offspring of party spirit, they have defended with all the ardour of zealots, wholly unconscious of the majesty of all governing nature. In the descriptive branches of natural history a person would infallibly expose himself to the severest censure, who should attempt to describe some hitherto unknown natural production, whether animal or vegetable, if he were ignorant of the allied genera and species, and perhaps neither a zoologist nor botanist. Yet an analogous ignorance of epidemics in those who, nevertheless, have discussed their nature, has but too frequently occurred, and for this reason we cannot apply to ourselves in this department, the significant words of Bacon, that we are the ancients and our forefathers the moderns, for we are equally remote with them from a scientific and comprehensive knowledge of it." Such are the opinions and observations of one who, had he been spared to witness the combined efforts which we are this night commencing, would have esteemed it as one of the happiest moments of his existence.

The present period appears, indeed, peculiarly suited for instituting such inquiries as our Society contemplates. The peace of Europe, which it is to be wished no national jealousies may disturb, is very favourable to the interchange of scientific information among medical men of different countries, and the facility of communication which the powers of steam have created, enable us to carry on, almost simultaneously, observations at places remotely distant from each other. There probably never was a period in the world's history

when human knowledge was so advanced in all its branches as at the present time. Those sciences, more especially, which are applicable to the elucidation of diseases and their causes may be said to be creations of modern date. Chemistry, or at least so much of it as is worthy the name of a science, is scarcely a century old, and that department of it which is distinguished under the name of animal chemistry, has risen to importance within the memory of many here present. To give you an instance of its progress, I will remember when Dr. WOLLASTON, (one of the most acute philosophers, the most scrupulously attentive to minutiae, which the world has ever produced; whose goniometer, camera lucida, differential thermometer; whose discoveries in metallurgy, whose experiments on sounds—so acute that ears less sensitive than his own could not even hear them,—all mark the extreme acumen of his intellect,)—I will remember when this accomplished chemist was asked by his friend, Dr. MARCET, to analyse the blood in diabetes mellitus, for the express purpose of ascertaining whether it contained sugar. In a letter of reply, which will be found in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1811, he details numerous experiments which he had made, as well with diabetic blood as with healthy blood in which minute portions of sugar were purposely dissolved. The conclusion to which he came was, that diabetic blood contained no sugar in any quantity that he could appreciate. We now know, and it was several years since ascertained, by Dr. REES and others, that diabetic blood does contain sugar in a notable quantity. The existence of urea in the animal fluids of those labouring under albuminuria, is another fruit of modern discovery, and from these, and many similar instances of chemical research, we are led to hope much from its application, even to the objects which come within the scope of this Society.

Physiology has made prodigious progress of late years; I need only recall to your minds Professor SCHWANN'S theory of cell formation, whereby he has established, by observations with the microscope, the proposition that there is one common principle of development for the elementary particles of all organised bodies. This discovery so brilliant as to have won for its author the Royal Society's Copley Medal for 1845, and which must be ranked amongst the most important steps by which the science of physiology has ever been advanced, evinces how the improvement of a scientific instrument leads to the improvement of science itself, and encourages a hope that our investigations may be enriched by this powerful means of interrogating Nature with regard to her most minute and secret operations. From meteorology, pursued, as it now is, under the guidance of a master mind, by a Society expressly devoted to that branch of science we have grounds for expecting many valuable facts applicable to the elucidation of our subject; and I trust that one of our earliest acts may be an endeavour to form a close connection with that Society.

The progress of medical science itself has been no less conspicuous of late years than that of those branches of natural knowledge to which I have just alluded.

The great discoveries of LAENNEC have created a new era in medicine, and have given an importance to physical diagnosis, the influence of which has extended far beyond the limits of those diseases which he made the particular objects of his study.

Statistics too, have supplied us with a new and powerful means of testing medical truth, and we learn from the labours of the accurate LOUIS how appropriately they may be brought to bear upon the subject of epidemic diseases; his report, when engaged on a French commission for investigating the yellow fever at Gibraltar, in 1828, being a striking instance of their successful application.

As a matter for scientific inquiry, the subject of epidemics seems peculiarly well suited to occupy the attention of a Society. Diseases which effect only individuals here and there, admit of investigation by single observers, and perhaps are thus best studied; but those which affect masses of mankind, and whose ravages are spread over a wide extent of the earth's surface, require the combined efforts of numerous labourers, and the various researches of minds directed to different branches of the inquiry, and contemplating the phenomena

from different points of view. They require that observations should be simultaneously carried on in many and widely-distant places, in order that deceptions may not arise from causes which, though in appearance general, are really only local and accidental. When the cholera first broke out at Bombay, bleeding proved so successful a remedy, if practised at the commencement of the attack, that many persons not of the medical profession, learned to perform the operation, that no time might be lost; and according to the testimony of a near relative of mine, hundreds of lives were thus saved. The same treatment, pursued in Bengal, proved entirely abortive,—the inevitable inference being, not that the essential disease differed in the two places, but that the various success of the treatment depended on some accidental, though unknown circumstance.

In the infancy of geology, first studied in this country, many phenomena observed in the arrangement of the earth's crust, as it is found in this island, were supposed to furnish fixed laws; and this gave rise, among our philosophers to divers ingenious generalizations. But when these same philosophers had, from the establishment of universal peace, the opportunity of taking a wider range, and of studying the earth's structure, not in this country alone, but over the whole surface of the globe, they discovered, in many instances, that what they had supposed to be general laws were, after all only exceptional cases. We require therefore, in the study of epidemic diseases, as of geology, a wide field, in order that we may found theories on a sufficiently broad basis to avoid the risk of coming to partial and erroneous conclusions.

When the phenomenon of the migration of birds first attracted attention, how ridiculous were the notions of it entertained by philosophers. We have a paper in the *Philosophical Transactions*, written to refute a belief, confidently stated by a Dutch writer, of less than a century ago, that swallows lie immersed at the bottom of the ocean, and other waters, during the winter season. This is no bad illustration of the effects of partial observation and of the absurdities to which it may lead. The welfare and prosperity of the people at large ought to be a main object with all good governments. It seems, therefore, to be matter of sound policy that they should facilitate by all available means the study of morbid phenomena which have so extensive an influence over the destinies of mankind. Commerce, agriculture, manufactures, have on many occasions been deeply injured, and the progress of civilization itself been seriously impeded by the outbreak of destructive epidemics, and it is not easy to estimate the evil that has been caused by the imposition of strict quarantine laws arising out of the fear of these visitations.

Again, a careful study of the sanitary arrangements which affect the health of our military and naval forces, fall legitimately within the scope and object of this Society, and ought naturally to lead the ruling powers to aid our endeavours to promote the public good, and to take an interest in our proceedings. How much benefit, for instance, may we not confer on the state by making the proper structure and site of military barracks and hospitals, and improvement in the accommodation and ventilation of ships, subjects of investigation and study. Even the most recent intelligence from our new settlement of Hong Kong, in China, leads to a belief that much of the mortality among her Majesty's troops at that station is owing to the defective and ill-adapted construction, arrangement, and situation of the buildings appropriated to the reception of the sick. As governments are thus so much interested in questions connected with the subjects which we have taken up, let us hope that they will be kindly disposed to afford us every facility in their prosecution. That a thorough knowledge of epidemic diseases very nearly concerns the welfare of all classes of the population in a mere individual sense, is a fact which hardly needs illustration. There is scarcely a family to be found that has not lost some of its members by small-pox, measles, hooping-cough, or scarlet fever, diseases which are always more or less prevalent among us, and respecting all of which there are yet many questions which remain to be solved. The length of the radius of infection,—the question of mediate contagion, to third parties, through clothing and other channels,—the period of the attack at which the infection in each disease is most active,—the length of time that it may exist in an

infected locality, and the means of its destruction, have never yet been determined with accuracy. The causes of exemption in individual cases have never been made out. The period of incubation admits of further investigation; uncertainty prevails as to the efficacy of preventive measures; and, finally, there is much difference of opinion as to modes of treatment. Respecting febrile diseases not exanthematous, such as plague, yellow fever, and typhus, many interesting questions remain for solution; and, among them, the very difficult one of contagion is of paramount importance. The testimonies against and in favour of its existence are most conflicting; and although we must be on our guard to avoid degenerating into mere disputants on this point, where so many others should claim a due share of our attention, yet it cannot be denied, that if by more comprehensive views, and a larger collection of well-authenticated facts, we could determine this *vexata quæstio*, we should be conferring an inestimable boon on the whole human race.

Epidemic febrile diseases will, no doubt, be the subjects of our chief study, as being immeasurably of the most common occurrence, and most fatal in their results; but we must not forget that there have in times past existed, and there may exist again, epidemic visitations of diseases of a nervous character, as, for instance, tarantism, the dancing mania, and other allied affections;—of a hæmorrhagic nature, as apoplexy, which has been known to exist epidemically in Holland; and even of a cachectic nature, as leprosy and scrofula, in which diseases the endemic character has occasionally past into the epidemic form.

Our labours, then, being connected with subjects of such universal interest, ought to ensure us the support of all classes of the community; and, as our inquiries are of a nature which must involve considerable expense, if efficiently carried out on a scale commensurate with their importance, I cannot help feeling that our success will in a great measure depend upon the encouragement and assistance which we receive from the public. We must not, however, forget, in looking to others, that it is our part to prove, by the fruits of our exertions, that we are able to furnish a full equivalent for the aid which we may receive.

Gentlemen, I cannot close this address, already I fear extended to undue length, without adverting to two circumstances which have excited in me sentiments of gratitude, shared, I doubt not, by every member of our Society. I allude in the first place, to the kind manner in which our efforts have been noticed, and our views have been furthered, by the support of the medical press. Of their power to serve us none can doubt; and I am thankful to be able to state that the desire to do so has in no degree fallen short of that power. Secondly, I wish to remind you that our best acknowledgments are due to the COUNCIL of the ROYAL MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY, who with a liberality worthy of the distinguished body for whom they act, have granted us permission to hold our general meetings in this most suitable apartment. Not only are our finances thus relieved from a considerable burthen, but from the very fact of our being allowed to assemble within these hallowed walls, we take an honourable position, which I trust it will be our especial care jealously to maintain.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE PRESIDENT, B. G. BABINGTON, M.D. F.R.S.

ON OPENING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SOCIETY,

AT THE HOUSE OF

THE ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY,

53, BERNERS STREET,

On Monday, November 3rd, 1851.

GENTLEMEN,—When I had the honour of addressing you from this chair, at the first ordinary meeting of the Epidemiological Society, in December last, I spoke of the origin of the Society, and of its progress up to that period. For the information of those who were not present at that meeting, and who may desire to know more on the subject, I beg to refer them to the *Lancet* of December, 7th.

Part of the duty I have to perform on this the commencement of our second session, and, happily, under the same time-honoured and, to us, hospitable roof, is, gentlemen, to give you a brief account of what the Society has done since it held its first ordinary meeting here. A statement of this kind will not be without its utility, in showing to yourselves and others, that the tide of our undertaking is flowing on continuously and prosperously, as measured by the interesting matter brought forward at our monthly meetings, and, moreover, that we have an under-current, at least equally strong, in the more quiet but less efficient working of our various committees.

On the 2nd of December, 1850, after I had concluded my address, a paper, by Dr. Bryson, “On the Infectious Origin and Propagation of Cholera,” was in part read by that gentleman.

At the second ordinary meeting (January 6, 1851) the reading of Dr. Bryson’s paper was concluded.

At the third ordinary meeting (February 3), a paper “On the Origin and Progress of Cholera and Small pox in Guernsey,” by Dr. Elliott Hoskins, was read by Dr. Gull.

At the fourth meeting (in March), Dr. McWilliam read a paper “On the Recent Yellow Fever Epidemy in Brazil.”

At the fifth meeting, (April 7,) Mr. R. H. Cooke was present to read a paper “On the Epidemic Mental Diseases of Children;” but the meeting having resolved that the discussion on yellow fever should be continued during that evening, Mr. Cooke kindly consented to postpone the reading of his paper until the meeting in June.

At the sixth meeting of the Society, (May 5,) the discussion on “yellow fever” was resumed, and, having continued longer than was anticipated, Dr. Snow, who began a paper “On the Mode of Propagation of Cholera,” was obliged to defer its conclusion.

At the seventh meeting, (June 2,) Mr. R. H. Cooke read his paper “On the Epidemic Mental Diseases of Children,” founded on Hecker’s two pamphlets,—the one entitled “Children’s Pilgrimages,” and the other “Sympathy;” after which Dr. Snow finished his paper on Cholera.

At the eighth meeting, (July 7,) Mr. Hunt read a paper “On the Uses and Limits of Statistical Science as applied to the Study of Epidemic Diseases.”

At the ninth and last meeting of the Society, (Aug. 4,) a paper “On the Nature of Epidemics,” by Mr. Grove, was read by Dr. McWilliam.

The reading of each of these papers was followed by a discussion; and reports and abstracts of all the papers read at the Society’s meetings have appeared in the London and Provincial Medical Journals.

The paper by Dr. Bryson, "On Cholera," and that by Dr. M'William, "On Yellow Fever," have each, by the permission of the Council, been published in the form of a pamphlet; and Dr. Bryson's paper having been collated from official documents, it was necessary for him to obtain the sanction of the Lords of the Admiralty, which I understand was willingly granted, prior to its publication.

Having thus presented you with a brief outline of the proceedings of the Society at the ordinary meetings, I feel bound to mention, that, on each occasion, the members and visitors gave ample testimony of their sense of the value of the papers read before the Society. Gentlemen, it is to me a source of much regret—for our utility is considerably lessened by the circumstance—that the present state of its finances will not permit the Society to publish these valuable contributions. Let us hope, that the time is not far distant when, by a more general interest manifested in our labours, and a corresponding increase in our resources, we shall be enabled to do so.

I may however state, that in the meantime, although there is a law of the Society, to the effect, that all Papers, after being read, shall become its property, the Council will not refuse to permit their authors to publish them either in the medical journals, or in a separate form.

While on this subject, I may add, that a resolution of Council has been passed, that the discussion on any paper shall not be prolonged beyond the second night, as a contrary practice was found to interfere with the business of the Society.

As there may be present some of our members who have not seen the medical journals in which, from time to time, the working of the Society has been noticed, I may state, that the various committees formed for special purposes have been for some time steadily engaged in the performance of the duties they have respectively undertaken; and, with your permission, I will therefore say a few words respecting their progress.

The Committee on Small-pox and Vaccination have issued nearly one thousand printed forms of queries to hospitals and dispensaries, to union medical officers, and to other members of the Profession in London and in the country. Besides these, about thirty copies have been transmitted through the Hon. the Board of Directors of the East India Company, to medical men officially employed in the three presidencies of India. There have been already received by the Secretary of the Committee 254 replies to the queries,—a number considered sufficient to enable the Committee to proceed with their analysis without waiting for others that may come in. The Committee are however of opinion, that at least 800 more forms might be very advantageously distributed, so soon as there are funds to cover the necessary expense.

The Common Lodging-houses Committee, for the purpose of investigating the condition of common lodging-houses, as influencing the propagation and spread of epidemic diseases, have distributed 250 forms of queries, to which a sufficient number of replies has been received to enable them to draw out a Report, which has already been submitted to the Council.*

The Hospitals Committee, or Committee to inquire into the epidemic diseases

* When this Committee was appointed in the month of January, 1851, the main object proposed was the collection of Medical and other evidence, illustrative of the great evils inflicted on the Public Health by Common Lodging Houses, with the view of securing some legislative measure for their due regulation. In the course of the last Session the Earl of Shaftesbury carried successfully, through both Houses of Parliament, two of the most important measures which have hitherto been enacted, for promoting sanitary amelioration.

One of these acts was for the well ordaining of Common Lodging Houses: and the other, for empowering Boards of Guardians to erect improved Lodging Houses for the Poor. In consequence of these enactments, the interposition of the Epidemiological Society was fortunately to a great degree rendered unnecessary: but this important subject and the working of the Act of Parliament still requires and will receive the attention of the Committee.

originating and prevailing in public hospitals, have held several meetings at the house of the Chairman, Dr. Addison, and have drawn up a tabular form of queries, which they purpose sending to all the British hospitals. For this purpose, they have applied to the Council for a grant of money.

The last Committee that was formed is that styled the *Epizootic Committee*, its object being, the investigation of those diseases which are found to prevail extensively among the lower, and more especially the domesticated animals. The working of this Committee has been undertaken by Professor Simonds, of the Royal Veterinary College, who will be aided in his labours by gentlemen of the veterinary profession in London and in the provinces. Already several veterinary surgeons in the provinces have been announced as Corresponding Members of the Epidemiological Society. In compliance with a desire expressed by Professor Simonds, that some members of the medical profession should unite with the veterinary members in carrying out the objects of the Epizootic Committee, several members of Council have already given in their names to be placed upon that Committee.

As connected with these Committees, more especially with the Common Lodging-houses Committee, I must not forget a debt of gratitude we owe to some of the laity, members as well as non-members of the Society. The gentlemen of the City Mission readily tendered their valuable assistance to the Common Lodging-houses Committee, and greatly facilitated their inquiries regarding the influence which the receptacles of the lowest and most depraved portions of society exerted in originating and spreading epidemic disease.

Valuable information, I am thankful to acknowledge, has also been rendered to the Common Lodging-houses Committee by Mr. Charles Cochrane, a lay member of the Society, distinguished as we all know, for his philanthropic exertions in the cause of sanitary improvement.

To the medical journals the gratitude of the Society is eminently due, for the facility they have afforded to the Honorary Secretaries and Secretaries of Committees, in giving notices of meetings, publishing reports, and impressing the Profession with the necessity of sending in answers to the queries issued by the respective Committees.

The editor of the *Veterinarian*, in his journal of September last, has dedicated a leading article to the Epidemiological Society.

Some important articles have also appeared in the *Assurance Magazine*, urging in strong terms the cause of the Society, and the benefits that must accrue to assurance societies by a due appreciation of those sanitary principles and laws which may be directed towards the mitigation, not only of sweeping epidemics such as cholera and influenza, but also of other diseases, which are silently, constantly, and even more fatally operating to the destruction of human life.

The publicity given to the objects of the Epidemiological Society in the *Assurance Magazine*, has procured for us a favourable notice in a German journal, the *Rundschau der Versicherungen*, edited by Herr E. A. Musius, of Leipsie.

To the General Board of Health, and to the Poor-law Board, the best thanks of the Society are due, for the permission given by these bodies to the members of the Small-pox Committee, to have access to documents in their possession regarding the subject of small-pox; and to the Registrar-General we are greatly beholden for the facilities he has afforded us by the distribution of our papers among his subordinate officers.

For the information of those members of the laity who seldom if ever see the Medical Journals, I have much pleasure in stating that, at the Nineteenth Anniversary Meeting of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, held at Brighton in August last, Sir Charles Hastings, the founder of the Association spoke highly of the objects and claims of the Epidemiological Society, and called upon the members of the association to give it their warm support.

The field of inquiry open to this Society is not limited to Great Britain alone; for it comprehends all parts of Europe, and extends even to India (the cradle, so to speak, of epidemic diseases), and to every portion of the habitable globe.

Impressed with this view, and feeling the necessity of establishing communica-

tions with the various countries of Europe, and with foreign as well as with our own Colonial possessions, a Committee has for some time had under consideration the subject of the appointment of foreign secretaries. Some progress has already been made in their arrangements, and the list of secretaries will doubtless soon be complete.

From Bengal two important letters have been addressed to the President and the Secretary of the Society, on the subject of small-pox and vaccination in India, by Mr. Bedford, a medical officer in the Company's service.

A pamphlet by the same gentleman has more recently reached this country, in which the Author submits some very important suggestions for the extension and perfection of vaccination, simultaneously with the systematic study of epidemic and endemic disease in India. I cannot, gentlemen, resist the temptation to read the following passage from this publication:—"Epidemic diffusion' is the most important medical question of the day, and can only be studied through systematic and parallel observations, conducted by a number of intelligent men working under one head. India, from its climatic peculiarities, and the nature of its 'services,' offers, I hesitate not to affirm, the most magnificent field in the world for carrying out such a series of connected observations as may tend to elucidate the laws of the most terrible diseases which 'flesh is heir to;' and it will redound to her eternal honour to be in advance in such inquiries. So pressing has the question now become in Europe, that an Epidemiological Society has been formed for the special purpose of collecting information in regard to this class of disease."

Having thus, Gentlemen, given you a hasty and, I fear, but an imperfect sketch of the past proceedings of the Society, I feel it my duty, before concluding, to say a few words as to the future.

I have already alluded to our working Committees, who are, so far as their means will admit, actively and zealously engaged in the prosecution of their respective inquiries. Able and hearty co-operation is offered to the Society, both at home and from abroad; and, for so young an Institution, it may be truly said, that the Epidemiological Society has excited an unwonted degree of interest and sympathy among the lay as well as the professional community. But our finances, like those of other societies not yet emerged from their infant state, are not in a very flourishing condition.

The heavy outlay consequent upon the earlier meetings, and upon other means of giving due publicity to the existence of the Society; the expense of printing and distributing the rules and objects of the Society; of the printing and postage of the queries issued by the various Committees, with other unavoidable sources of expenditure, have, (notwithstanding the kind and courteous liberality of the Council of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, in granting us the gratuitous use of their rooms during the past and present session), exhausted the amount received in donations and subscriptions during the past year.

But there is no reason to despair. The active and enlightened benevolence of this country, is not likely to turn aside from a Society, whose labours, devoted as they are, directly to the physical welfare of mankind, cannot be successfully prosecuted, without influencing likewise their moral condition. We, therefore, rely much upon public feeling and individual exertion, to induce others to join our ranks, and to aid us by pecuniary grants.

Already have some public bodies given us substantial proofs of the interest they take in our cause; and when, by the publication of one or more of our Committee reports, the attention of the Government and of the Honourable East India Company shall have been more immediately called to the importance of the objects and aims of the Society, we may reasonably expect some assistance from those quarters in furtherance of the good work.

For ourselves, we have only to do our duty, by endeavouring, as far as lies in our power, to accomplish the noble ends the Society has in view.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE PRESIDENT, B. G. BABINGTON, M.D., F.R.S.

ON OPENING THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SOCIETY,

AT THE HOUSE OF

THE ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY,

53, BERNERS STREET,

On Monday, November 1st, 1852.

GENTLEMEN,—You necessarily hear my voice so often in connexion with the ordinary business of our Society, that I am reluctant to occupy much of your time on our first meeting for the season, more especially as this is the third year I have had the honour of addressing you from this chair; so that it may well be supposed that I have exhausted the topics usually dwelt on, on such occasions; nevertheless I should feel that I had neglected a duty incumbent upon your President, and had lost an opportunity of endeavouring to be of some service to the Society, if I did not open our session with a few observations.

If we direct our attention to the mode in which human knowledge has progressively advanced in past times, we shall find that, apart from mere accidental circumstances, unconnected with man's exertions altogether, it has been effected in two different ways, which, though more or less blended together in all cases, do yet admit of distinction; and that one or other of these has predominated, according to the nature of the knowledge which has been advanced. In the war of invasion which has been constantly carried on by the known against the unknown,—by knowledge against ignorance,—champions may here and there have ridden forth from the ranks, and in single combat, attacked and vanquished some gigantic foe; but it is the combined and steady advance of those serried ranks themselves, to which we owe the grand inroads which have been made into the enemy's territory. To drop metaphor;—the one method of advancing knowledge is by individual, isolated mental effort; the other, by the combined and simultaneous labours of many. In the case of the abstract sciences, as for instance, the various branches of the mathematics, metaphysics, logic, ethics, et cætera, our advances have been made chiefly by the former method. The philosopher has contemplated his subject in his closet by the light of his own reasoning powers; and though, no doubt, he has derived ideas from those who have gone in the same track, yet these are but the instruments which he employs in his laborious endeavours to arrive at new truths; and as the solitary traveller in the wilds of Africa, aided by his compass and his telescope, penetrates the previously undiscovered regions of the material world,—so does *he* penetrate new regions in the world of science. Not so with the less perfect and more mixed varieties of human knowledge. To build a ship or a palace employs many heads and hands working in combination together. To study and advance geology needs the accumulated observations of numerous philosophers, wandering, hammer in hand, over many countries. The united skill and talent of many workmen are concentrated on the arts of metallurgy, on the manufacture of pottery and glass, and of linen, cotton, and woollen fabrics; so busily indeed is the ingenuity of many at work in these departments, that, as it is said, scarcely any new invention is worth three years' purchase, it being sure to be supplanted, in less than that time, by some other invention, still newer and better, which the employment of the former haply has suggested.

In the science of medicine the two methods which I have mentioned are pretty equally blended; for so varied are the facts on which it is founded, so infinitely modified by a thousand different circumstances, that it requires the combined efforts of many to amass a sufficient stock of information to enable us to discriminate that which is essential from that which is accidental, and thus to arrive at trustworthy results. So far indeed as medicine partakes of the nature of exact science, that is to say, in its chemical, its anatomical, its microscopical, its pathological elements, it

may be studied and advanced by individual efforts, and new truths may be worked out in the retirement of the study or the laboratory. But where it is only conjectural, and not reducible to exact rule and precise results; where, from the imperfection or complication of our data, we must have recourse to the probable instead of the certain, where we must balance chances, estimate averages, and strive to reconcile conflicting evidence;—there must we act in combination for the attainment of our object, since the experience of no individual is adequate to furnish a sufficiently broad basis on which to establish a general law.

Applying these considerations to the investigation of epidemic diseases in particular, we shall find that, while that investigation, no doubt, requires, to a certain extent, isolated research, it partakes much more, in the present state of our knowledge, of that character of mysterious uncertainty, of modification from various causes, operating differently in different places, and in different seasons, which demands for it the united exertions of many observers. Yes! gentlemen, it is only by the strength of numbers, banded together in a Society which ought to be as extensive as the range of epidemic diseases themselves, that we can hope to acquire a full insight into the nature, the causes, and the treatment of these wholesale destroyers of animal life. To state more in detail what branches of our subject require elucidation by individual research, and what by a collection of facts amassed from many quarters, I would remark, that whatever respects the phenomena of the individual case, such as a minute examination, chemical and microscopical, of the various secretions; a pathological investigation of the solids, as altered by disease and death; an observation of the temperature, and other physical conditions of the body, of the state of the various systems and functions,—falls under the former category, and is of a nature which cannot be gathered from cursory observation, or inferred from statistical data. It must be reported fresh from the original investigator, and has, in reality, no value unless coming direct from the fountain of all such knowledge,—Nature herself. The medical philosopher, for instance, who first discovered that there is albumen in the urine of those who have dropsy after scarlet fever, or in the alvine evacuations of those who are the subjects of cholera, added a great fact to our knowledge of those diseases; and this he did by his own researches, and not by any consideration of numbers, or averages, or other statistical data. It is not so with that other branch of our inquiries that respects the external circumstances by which epidemics are surrounded, and with which it is equally necessary to be acquainted, if we would comprehend the whole subject,—much more, if we would aspire to advance our knowledge of it. Here laymen may lend their aid as well as medical men; and the combined efforts of many may elicit information, which no individual exertion, no mental toil could attain. Thus the date and circumstances of the outbreak of an epidemic; its mortality; its effects, moral and social; the meteorological and telluric phenomena preceding, accompanying, and following it; its correlation to other events, and much that regards its statistics, may be observed, if opportunity offer, by all persons of intelligence, and must be gathered, if we would draw any conclusion, either positive or negative from them, by many persons working simultaneously for a common end. Here then we perceive one excellent reason for originating that which has never, strange as it may seem, been attempted heretofore,—the formation of a distinct association for the investigation of epidemics, and for enrolling among its members persons engaged in various occupations and pursuits, who, viewing the subject from different points, may increase the chance of throwing new light upon it. I would even hope, as our cause becomes more known and better understood, to awaken the sympathies of man's chief helpmate in all that is benevolent,—in all that tends to ameliorate his physical and moral condition, and to soften his destiny in this world of trial. For by whom should we entertain a better expectation of advocacy, than by those who ever prove our kindest ministers in the hour of sickness, and who themselves are liable, not only to epidemics common to the whole human race, but to some emphatically their own, dependant on that peculiar sorrow which our common mother brought as a curse upon her whole sex?

But there is another reason for our seeking assistance far and wide. Our inquiries, in order to be carried out on such a scale as shall ensure extended and useful public results, must necessarily be expensive. The pecuniary exigencies inseparable from

such an undertaking as ours, it may be somewhat undignified on this occasion to contemplate; but no cause, however scientific, or however demonstrably contributing to the general welfare of the community, can prosper without involving the necessity for some pecuniary outlay, even though every one interested in it may be perfectly willing to bestow his personal services without remuneration.

An enthusiastic admirer of nature is contemplating a delightful tour, and his mind is filled with a prospect of the charming scenery, the works of nature and of art, and the varieties of manners and of men he will have the opportunity of encountering and observing,—the stores of useful and interesting information he will acquire. His thoughts are revelling in this enchanting future; but is there not a certain vulgar consideration to be kept in view ere he can realize all these pleasurable anticipations? Must he not look to the state of his finances? Can he move one step without ascertaining whether he possess a balance at his bankers' sufficient to carry him through his projected journey? And if he should find that his resources are but limited, has he any other alternative, notwithstanding his brilliant hopes and bright imaginings, but in limiting the extent of his journey also? Now we are somewhat in the same condition as this traveller. We have a most pleasing, because a most useful, journey before us. We are enthusiastic in our desire to perform it, but we are limited in our progress by the state of our resources. Gentlemen, I am far from wishing to assume the tone of complaint. We are, I am well aware, but a young Society. We meet, I acknowledge, with as much support as we can fairly expect; and it may justly be urged, that we are bound to prove our pretensions by shewing what progress we are making,—what useful purpose we are answering,—before we can claim to be liberally supplied with means of carrying on further operations. It is not to be denied, however, on the other hand, that the restricted amount of our funds *does* materially limit that progress and that utility. In order to impress on you what, indeed, must be so evident as to need no proof, it is only necessary to mention, among many others, two items of expenditure, intimately connected with our prosperity. One of these is the printing and extensive circulation of the Queries of our various Committees; the other, the publication by the Society, of the valuable papers read at our meetings. The former, which may figuratively be called sowing the seeds of information, is at present but imperfectly performed; while the latter, which may be called gathering its choicest fruits, and offering them to the public, has not yet been even attempted. Let me add a third item of most useful expenditure in the collection of a library for consultation of works on epidemic diseases, or collaterally bearing on the subject. It may not be generally known to my audience, that the bibliography of this branch of medicine is most extensive. A volume presented to us by Dr. Ferguson, entitled "*Bibliotheca Epidemiographica*," published in 1842, enumerates no fewer than 1,822 works on this subject; while the publications which have reference to the last visitation of Cholera in 1848-49, are so numerous, that they would well nigh double the number. Now it is one of the faults of writers of our day, generally acknowledged, but especially charged upon them by Hecker in his address to which I alluded the year before last, that they are not readers as well as writers, and that they do not study medical history, including, of course, the history of epidemics. The consequence is that, without being aware of it, they often go over beaten ground, and give us what they think new facts, while in truth they are only serving up, with some alteration of diction, facts which have long since been before the world. Nine-tenths of the works alluded to in the *Bibliotheca* above-mentioned, have probably not been read or heard of by any of us; and it is not, therefore, extravagant to suppose, that much valuable information may be contained in them, with which we are at present unacquainted. In this point of view, a special library, that is to say, containing exclusively books connected with our subject, becomes a highly desirable appendage to a Society like ours.

Gentlemen, it may seem superfluous in this, our third session, that I should deem it expedient to say a single word respecting the wide range as well as vast importance of the task which we have set ourselves to perform. I have, however, reason to think, that many persons,—chiefly of course among those not of our profession,—influenced by our name, take too narrow a view of the scope and objects of an

Epidemiological Society. These objects are not fully attained in an investigation, however searching, into the particular diseases of an epidemic character, which have in times past visited, and do still, from time to time, visit our own and other nations. They include also all those circumstances in any way bearing upon epidemic diseases, by which human health is predisposed to receive them. The drainage of towns and houses, their supply of water, the manner of living of the inhabitants, their clothing, lodging, and food, the influence of the soil beneath their feet, of the atmosphere around them, of the heavenly bodies above their heads,—all fall within the scope of our inquiries. “It will be a further part of the Society’s province,” says a paragraph in the paper on this express subject, which we at the commencement of our labours put forth, “to ascertain the operation of existing legal enactments which bear upon epidemic diseases,—such as those which relate to quarantine, to vaccination, to the sale of unwholesome or adulterated food, and to the removal of nuisances—to inquire into the defects of these enactments and point out such alterations as may be necessary for the protection of the public health.” We would not willingly clash with the objects of other Societies. There is room enough for all. Distinct associations may be formed for meteorology, for statistics, and for state medicine, if by that name is meant something which our inquiries do not embrace; but we do believe our own Society, from its practical tendency, its direct influence on the physical welfare of man, to have, at least, an equal, if not a superior, claim to patronage and support; and I would earnestly appeal to the public, not for the sake of science alone, but for the sake of ameliorating the condition of that public itself, to aid us in our undertaking.

It may not be out of place in alluding to other Societies, here to mention, that the most munificent contributor to our own, among many who have proved staunch friends to our cause, is our honored and estimable elder sister, the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society. She offers us the right hand of fellowship, and in giving us the shelter of her roof, affords us, at the same time, what is still more valuable, the prestige of her good will. “*Laudari laudato*” we all know is usually admitted as presumptive evidence of worth, but, “*adjuvari laudato*” is a far stronger testimony of approval.

Gentlemen, ere I close these preliminary remarks, I would wish to draw your attention to the important fact, that Cholera has been raging in Europe several months, and will, judging from past experience, very probably visit this country in the course of the ensuing year. Now if there be a disease which more especially vindicates the need of our forming an association for its study, it is surely this. Nay, it was this disease which suggested the notion. It behoves us all, therefore, individually and collectively to be on the alert, and to endeavour, if practicable, to inculcate, with some approach to general concordance, what measures of precaution, and what line of treatment ought to be adopted. The Council of your Society have not overlooked the necessity for a movement in this emergency. They have appointed a Cholera Committee, and I earnestly request you all to aid them, by any facts or suggestions which you may possess on the subject. I am, I confess, not one of those who entertain any very sanguine expectation that some single specific remedy will be found out for this disease, that shall constantly prove efficacious. We have not found such a remedy for typhus fever, which has been known to us time out of mind; and every now and then we meet with cases which baffle our best skill,—I know not why we should be more likely to do so in the case of Cholera, with which we have been only recently acquainted. Neither am I disposed to yield to the prevalent notion, that nothing has been done, and that we are as ignorant now of Cholera, as when the malady first appeared among us. I do not in the least doubt, that many lives have been saved, not only by prompt attention, founded on experience, to the early stage, commonly called premonitory, but even by a judicious treatment of the stage of collapse. Those who have seen and treated many cases of this disease, must, I am sure, be convinced of this; and if the most strenuous endeavours have not oftener been crowned with success, we must attribute it, at least in part, to the intense power of the poison, and not wholly, as is too usual, to our ignorance of the indication to be fulfilled in its removal. In scarlet fever, which by the bye, is at this time, according to the Registrar-General’s report, very preva-

lent, suggesting the propriety of our forming a Committee for its investigation, much the same difficulty in the treatment occasionally presents itself. The virulence of its poison is so intense that, do what you will, the patient has evidently, from a very early period of the attack, humanly speaking, no chance of recovery. Nevertheless, we do not on that account come to the conclusion, that we know nothing of the treatment of scarlet fever. I intend not, by what I have said, to discourage further attempts to find more efficacious remedies, but only to oppose the hasty opinion of those, who consider our knowledge of cholera and its treatment so very far behind that which we possess of other epidemic diseases.

But I am wandering from my purpose, which was merely to make a few general observations; and as I have already taken up too much of your time in doing so, I shall conclude by enumerating the papers which have been brought before the Society from the commencement of last session to the present time, and by reading you a short account, drawn up by our Honorary Secretaries, of the proceedings of our various Committees since the Council made their Report in May last.

PAPERS READ DURING THE PAST SESSION OF THE SOCIETY.

Papers, on the following interesting subjects, have been read at the Ordinary Meetings of the Society, during the past Session:—

Nov. 3rd, 1851.—“On an Epidemic Outbreak of Small Pox in the Mauritius,” by Mr. GARDNER, of Bayswater. Read by Dr. M’William.

Dec. 1st.—“On the Circumstances connected with the Rise and Development of Asiatic Cholera in the Island of Jamaica,” by Dr. GAVIN MILROY. Read by the Author.

Jan. 5th, 1852.—“On a Rational Treatment of Cholera,” by Mr. J. W. COX. Read by the Author.

Feb. 2nd.—“On Epidemic Dysentery in China, during the years 1840 . 1 . 2,” by Dr. BRYSON. Read by the Author.

Mar. 1st.—“On Epidemics of the Second and Third Centuries,” by Dr. ROBERT GORDON LATHAM. Read by the Author.

April 5th.—“On the Pathology, Causes, and Treatment of Cholera,” by Dr. GEO. GRANT, of Richmond. Read by the Author.

May 3rd.—“On Fever: more especially, that form of it known as ‘Yellow Fever,’” by EDWARD BUSCOMBE, M.D. Read by the Author.

June 7th.—Two Papers were read: 1st,—“On the History of the Introduction of Vaccination into India,” by Dr. FINCH. Read by the Author. 2nd,—“On Vaccination in the Bombay Presidency,” by Mr. STEWART. Read by Dr. Scaton.

July 5th.—“On the prevailing Furunculoid Epidemic,” by THOMAS HUNT, Esq. Read by the Author.

August 8th.—“On the Influence of Hill Climate in India on European Regiments,” by Dr. CORBYN. Communicated by Licut.-Col. SYKES; read by Dr. M’William.

COMMITTEES.

The **SMALL-POX and VACCINATION COMMITTEE**.—Since the Council presented their Report, on the 3rd of May last, the Small-Pox and Vaccination Committee have issued the Letters of Inquiry which were then stated to be in preparation, and have received about 1,500 replies. These have all been analyzed and arranged. Further communications in answer to the Queries of the Committee have been received from India, through the courtesy of the Hon. the Court of Directors of the East India Company, and very full and accurate accounts of the systems pursued with regard to vaccination in the Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay, and their results, have been furnished by Drs. Finch and Stewart, respectively. Most valuable information, and accurate statistics, on the present condition of the following Countries, compared with their condition 50 years before the introduction of Vaccination, have been received. In all cases the statistics have been obtained from State Documents, and forwarded to Dr. W. Lewis, who has charge of this department of the Inquiries, directly by the Ambassadors, Chargés d'Affairs, Consuls or Foreign Ministers of the different Countries; so that the most perfect reliance may be placed on them. More answers would have been obtained by this time, but for the distance of some of them from England.

NEW YORK,	BAVARIA,	DENMARK,
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SWEEDEN,	MAINE,	PRUSSIA,
COPENHAGEN,	HAMBURG,	AUSTRIA.

Similar Documents are in course of preparation for the Society in

FRANCE,	NORWAY,	BOSTON, U.S.,	RUSSIA, &c. &c.
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The information obtained from India, as well as that from the sources just enumerated, will be made use of in the Committee's Report.

The members of the Committee have been so dispersed during the recess, that the progress which has been made in the preparation of the Report has not been so great as would otherwise have been the case. They will now, however, at once re-assemble, and resume their labours; and although they do not think that they would be justified in hindering themselves by any positive pledge, they yet entertain a reasonable expectation, that this Session of the Society will not terminate without their having reported on one portion, at least, of the important inquiry intrusted to them.

The **EPIZOOTIC COMMITTEE** have completed their Queries, which are now in the press, and will be speedily distributed among the members of the Medical and Veterinary professions, agriculturists and others throughout the country.

COMMON LODGING-HOUSES COMMITTEE.—As has been stated on a former occasion, the duties of this Committee are, in consequence of the measures carried through Parliament by Lord Shaftesbury, limited to the observation of the working of those important enactments.

CHOLERA COMMITTEE.—On the recent outbreak of Cholera on the Continent of Europe, a Committee was established for the purpose of watching the progress of that disorder, and of making such investigation into its nature, causes, and mode of propagation, as might seem to be desirable.

Through the courtesy of the General Board of Health, the Committee have been furnished with copies of Mr. Grainger's Despatches to the General Board from Berlin and other towns, relative to the progress of cholera on the Continent; as well as with a copy of Mr. Grainger's General Report on the same subject, presented to the Board of Health since his return to London.

The Committee have also had the satisfaction, through the kind permission of the Right Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of being allowed access to the Despatches of the Consul-General at Warsaw, as well as to

those of other English Consuls abroad, on the subject of Cholera, from all of which valuable information has been obtained.

CONTINUED FEVER COMMITTEE.—This Committee, which was recently instituted for the purpose of inquiring into the continued fevers of this country, have already prepared a series of Queries, which are now in the hands of the printer, and will soon be issued to the Medical Officers of Hospitals and Dispensaries, as well as to Union Medical Officers, and other members of the Profession in the Metropolis and throughout the country.

A Committee for the purpose of investigating the Diseases affecting the Vegetable Kingdom, is now in course of formation; its more especial object being to ascertain the coexistence, and possibly the connexion of such diseases with those which affect mankind and the lower animals, in an epidemic form.

There are other subjects which are considered by the Council as highly desirable to be investigated by Committees; but which they think had better be postponed until further progress has been made by the Committees already existing, and the Society has had time to relieve itself from the expenses attendant upon the operations of these Committees.

HOSPITALS COMMITTEE.—The Hospitals Committee have prepared a Table of Queries relative to Erysipelas, and the allied Epidemic Diseases of Hospitals, which will be issued to all the British Hospitals, and to the Army and Navy Medical Departments, in order that a tabular account may be kept of all such cases occurring in each Hospital from the 1st of Jan. to the 31st of Dec. 1853, with a view to the tables being returned and analyzed at the end of that time.

Such, Gentlemen, has been the extent of the progress which we have made during the past session; and let me hope, in conclusion, that that which we commence this evening may, in its course, afford us the opportunity of shewing, that our zeal is untiring,—our labours unceasing,—and that thus we shall at least deserve success, which, we are all well aware, is the surest way to attain it.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES.

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